

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus for the automated processing of meat, comprising a transport element for transporting the meat, a cutting element for cutting and/or trimming the meat, a counter-surface for the cutting element and at least one control and/or regulating apparatus, which is in functional connection with the cutting element, characterized in that a threading element is mounted forwardly of the counter-surface in a transport plane of the meat, said threading element being bent at an angle with respect to the counter-surface whereby an outer end of the threading element extends at least partially across said transport plane to at least partially lift one side of the meat prior to the meat reaching said counter-surface.
2. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 1, characterised in that the threading element is an integral component of the counter-surface.
3. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the threading element is constructed as an extension of the counter-surface.

4. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the threading element is a spatula-like plate element and has an elongated shape, rounded at ~~the~~ free end.

5. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 4, characterised in that the plate element is chamfered at least on ~~the~~ side of facing the meat.

6. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that a unit consisting of the counter-surface and the threading element is constructed as swivellable.

7. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to 6, characterised in that a unit consisting of the counter-surface and the threading element is swivellable about at least one rotational axis.

8. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 6, characterised in that the unit consisting of the counter-surface (13) and the threading element is (14) movable in a linear direction.

9. (Currently Amended) An Apparatus according to claim 8, characterised in that a deflector element (30) is arranged on ~~the~~ side of the counter-surface opposite the threading element.

10. (Currently Amended) A~~M~~method for the automated processing of meat, comprising the steps of:

[-]transporting the meat into an~~the~~ area of a cutting element,

[-]running the meat up against a counter-surface before the meat reaches the cutting element,

[-]cutting and/or trimming the meat by means of the cutting element and

[-]removing the meat,

characterized in that the meat is threaded by a threading element before running up

against the counter-surface, wherein the meat is at least partially lifted by the

threading element from ~~the~~one side thereof and then guided on to the counter-surface.

11. – 12. (Canceled)